

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 SY-05

USSS-00 IGA-01 EB-07 COME-00 IO-10 /092 W

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O R 251200Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6826

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 13280

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING OF TWO USIA OFFICERS

REF: BEIRUT 13140

1. ECON COUNSELOR ACCOMPANIED BY POLITICAL OFFICER HOWELL CONTACTED FORMER ECONOMIC MINISTER AND JUMBLATT DEPUTY, ABBASS KHALAF, LATE AFTERNOON OCT. 24 CONCERNING KIDNAPPING OF GALLAGHER AND DYKES. USG'S CONCERN ABOUT THIS MATTER AND AVAILABLE BACKGROUND INFORMATION WAS CONVEYED TO KHALAF. ANY ASSISTANCE KHALAF COULD RENDER WITH RESPECT TO FREEING GALLAGHER AND DYKES WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

2. KHALAF IMMEDIATELY EXPRESSED HIS DEEP REGRET AND VOLUNTEERED TO UNDERTAKE WHATEVER HE COULD DO. WHEN IT WAS NOTED THAT, WHILE WE WERE UNAWARE OF LOCATION OF
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GALLAGHER AND DYKES, THERE WAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEY

MIGHT BE IN THE HANDS OF THE PALESTINIAN REJECTION FRONT, KHALAF VOLUNTEERED TO TRY TO GET IN CONTACT WITH GEORGE HABBASH AND/OR TAYSIR KUBBEH BY TELEPHONE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THESE WERE DIFFICULT PEOPLE TO DEAL WITH. HE WOULD DO HIS BEST, HOWEVER, AND REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH US.

3. IT WAS POINTED OUT TO KHALAF THAT THE REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER WAS ESTABLISHED IN BEIRUT BECAUSE OF THE EXCELLENT FACILITIES THE CITY HAD TO OFFER. ESTABLISHING THE CENTER HERE RESULTED IN THE CREATION OF 90 JOBS FOR LEBANESE NATIONALS. THIS INFORMATION SEEMED TO HAVE IMPRESSED KHALAF. HE RAISED THE GENERAL QUESTION OF THE ACTIVITY OF U.S. FIRMS IN LEBANON AND SAID THAT HE HOPED THE RECENT DIFFICULTIES HAD NOT CAUSED TOO MANY FIRMS TO LEAVE. IN REPLY, IT WAS NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY FEW OF THE 300 FIRMS IN BEIRUT HAD DEPARTED SO FAR, THE CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE NEWS OF KIDNAPPINGS HAD A VERY ADVERSE EFFECT. CONTINUING TO REGISTER HIS CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE DEPARTURE OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY, KHALAF ASKED IF THE NOTICE IN THE NEWSPAPERS ABOUT REGISTRATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS INDICATED THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS ABOUT TO RECOMMEND EVACUATION. EMBOFFS STATED THAT THIS DID NOT IMPLY THAT A DECISION TO EVACUATE HAD BEEN TAKEN AT THIS TIME.

4. EMBOFFS ASKED KHALAF POINT BLANK WHAT THE ATTITUDE OF KHALAF'S GROUP WAS WITH REGARD TO THE PRESENCE OF U.S. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN LEBANON. KHALAF REPLIED THAT THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY WAS MOST WELCOME AND THAT HE HOPED THE RECENT EVENTS WOULD NOT RESULT IN TOO MANY DEPARTURES. GODLEY

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